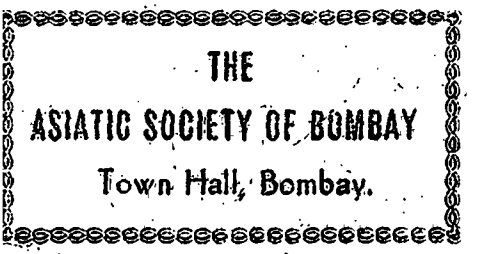
Damaged books
physically verified
30/6/2000
Lot No:-103

821 2370
Hip/891
74871



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018

BALLADS OF THE EAST,

74871
ae

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1846.

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

CONTENTS.

THE TARTAR GIRL. A Ballad of China 1

RHINE STEAMER RHYMES 26

HAFIZ RUHMUT'S DAUGHTER. A Ballad of Rohilkhund . . 43

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND 50

THE SITAR. A Moorish Melody from the Alif Lyla . . 54

MAHUMMED KASIM 56

KISHEN KOOMAREE, PRINCESS OF OODEEPOOR. A true Tale of Rajwara 68

THE TARTAR GIRL.

A Ballad of China.

TO VIRGINIA.

PART I.

1.

A MAIDEN, with her spinning-wheel,
Sits by her father's door;
Though fast she plies with hand and heel,
Winding off thread upon the reel,
Her brow is clouded o'er.

2.

Deep thought is working on that brow;
Her brother, young and fair,
Has drawn the dreadful lot, and now
Must leave his parents' home: and how
Will they the parting bear?

3.

He is an only son, and born
To them when age was nigh:
If from their threshold he be torn,
How can they, desolate, forlorn,
In comfort live and die?

4.

With him doth end a race of fame:
And shall the good and brave
Perish in memory and name,
With none to light the sacred flame
Illumining their grave?

5.

No! he must bide his father near:
There is but only he
Can lay the old man on his bier,
And wipe away the widow's tear,
And save the family.

6.

She starts, and lays her spinning-wheel
With wonted care aside;
In warrior garb, with cap of steel,
Her brother's self from head to heel,
She goes to meet the guide.

7.

Caparison'd her brother's steed,
The guide holds rein in hand;
Quick mounting in her brother's stead,
She pricks away with eager speed
To join the warrior band.

8.

Day after day, five thousand lee,
O'er hill and desert far,
They seek the Emperor, where he,
Amidst the wilds of Tartary,
Is waging doubtful war.

9.

And ever foremost as they ride,
With spirit fresh and keen,
Bearing himself with soldier's pride,
When danger and fatigues have tried,
That beardless youth is seen.

10.

In camp he soon doth win his way
To favour with the brave;
They note him as not fierce to slay,
But never backward in the fray,
And always prompt to save.

11.

Five years of weary war have past
With many a doubtful fight;
But now, encamp'd amid the waste,
Preparing for their combat last,
Two armies are in sight.

12.

The Emperor in person there
One mighty host directs:
He bids his generals prepare,
While he, examining with care,
The battle-field selects.

13.

"Where is there one,—a warrior tried
Wary, and wise, and bold?
Who will this torrent swim, and hide
In ambush on the other side,
And there his station hold,

14.

"Until committed he shall see
In battle, rank to rank,
The last line of the enemy;
Then let him to sure victory
Charge down upon their flank."

15.

Out steps the youth: — "That one am I!
Give me a thousand men,
And I will do thy bidding high,
Or in the doing it will die;
But thou shalt surely win!"

16.

The combat rages fierce and long
From morning until eve;
Corps after corps, in phalanx strong,
Into the thick of battle throng,
Where none yield while they live.

17.

The standards of supreme command
Still wide apart are set;
Both leaders, with their chosen band,
Watching the tide of battle, stand: —
The ambush stirs not yet.

18.

See! they advance! reserves and all
In one last struggle join:
"Up now my thousand!" At the call
These heroes, like a whirlwind, fall
Upon the rebel line.

19.

It yields! it breaks! "Charge once again;
The standard must be won!"
Onward they press, till, slaying, slain,
Reckless of self, the flag they gain:
It falls! the work is done.

20.

The rebel slain, the war is o'er,
And peace resumes her sway:
And now the mighty Emperor
Adjudges to each warrior
The guerdon of that day.

21.

" First call," saith he, " the beardless youth
Who led the ambuscade:
The highest meed is his; for, sooth!
Our triumph had been chang'd to ruth
But for his timely aid."

22.

The youth is found, dust-cover'd, bruis'd,
Yet safe by miracle:
" Ask what thou wilt, nor be refus'd,—
A boon I grant, as kings are us'd;
Thy name and lineage tell."

23.

" I am not what I seem, my shame
Permit that it lie hidden:
I serve here in another's name;
To gain a parent's blessing came
A substitute unbidden.

24.

" But let this name be honour'd still ;
And may thy favours fall,
Ennobling, if such be thy will,
The worthy one whose place I fill ;
To him I yield them all."

25.

The boon is granted : homeward wends
The youth with joy of heart.
The Emperor his mandate sends,
And honour on his path attends ;
Yet oft the tear doth start ;—

26.

The father and the mother dear, —
Who knows if yet they live ?
Endless the journey seems, till near
She sees the well-known roof appear —
" Now God, thy mercy give !"

27.

She enters, — all is as before :
Resum'd the maiden's guise ;
Again she sits beside the door,
With spinning-wheel, and evermore
The clanking footboard plies.

28.

But what is here ? a gath'ring crowd,
A youth in purple dress,
Whose titles are proclaim'd aloud :
And well his kindred may be proud
Of honour such as this.

29.

The youth they carry home in state
Between his parents dear :
These spy the maiden at the gate, —
The lov'd one, lost one, for whose fate
They oft had shed the tear.

30.

There is a height of happiness,
That makes the senses whirl:—
Such happiness was theirs, I guess,
While, sobbing in sweet joy, they press
The maiden to their hearts, and bless
That noble Tartar Girl.

THE TARTAR GIRL.

PART II.

1.

THE maid is honour'd in her home;
Still doth she sit and spin,
While all the rich and noble come
Their courtesies to pay, and some
Who seek her hand to win.

2.

Small pleasure to a heart like hers
Such courtesies impart:
Nor station, rank, nor pride of purse,
Nor all the arts of light converse,
Can win that noble heart.

3.

But one there is, who comes not nigh
His courtesies to pay;
One that she thinks of with a sigh,
And looks around, and wonders why
He only stays away.

4.

A literary student, he
Had known the maid a child,
And oft with tales of history,
And deeds of high-soul'd energy,
Her fancy had beguil'd.

5.

From him it was she learn'd to hate
The wicked, low, and mean;
To love the noble, good, and great,
Until she long'd to imitate,
And be what they had been.

6.

And while he taught her all he knew,
And saw her every day
Exhibiting some virtue new,
What wonder if affection grew
As childhood pass'd away?

7.

But never guess'd he how he priz'd
And lov'd the maid, until,
For other's sake self-sacrific'd,
She went a warrior disguis'd
Her brother's place to fill.

8.

The path then of the wanderer
In fancy he pursu'd;
And cherishing her image dear,
The studies he had shar'd with her
Beguil'd his solitude.

9.

She had return'd to realize
The visions she inspir'd.
But he! how dare he lift his eyes
To one for deeds of high emprize
By all the world admir'd?

10.

Once only did their four eyes meet.
Unheard of from that day,
(Not even hope's illusion sweet
His soul's fix'd purpose can defeat,)
He hurries far away.

11.

The public halls of Singanfoo
Shine bright with silk and gold:
The Emperor is passing through,
And all the world is there to view
The court that he will hold.

12.

He hath proclaim'd that there shall be,
For literary merit,
A button giv'n of high degree,
A prize to all his subjects free,
The worthiest to wear it.

13.

Three candidates appear to claim
The honours thus bestow'd: —
Two, elders of establish'd name,
The third, a youth unknown to fame,
A stranger from the crowd.

14.

In science, the examiners
Find perfect all the three,
And essays each in prose and verse
Shall to the Emperor rehearse: —
Himself the judge will be.

15.

The elders first the steps ascend,
And read, in tone approv'd,
The essays they with care have penn'd:
The critics find no word to mend,
But hear them read unmov'd.

16.

The younger one now mounts in turn:—
With voice like music sweet
He tells of deeds that glory earn,
And illustrates with thoughts that burn
The subjects he doth treat:

17.

The duty man to country owes,
To parents, and to kin,
He with discrimination shows:—
With fervour now his language glows,
And stirs the soul within,

18.

Now moves compassion e'en to tears,
Alternate at his will:—
In all the pow'r of mind appears:
The Emperor approving hears;
The hall loud plaudits fill.

19.

But hark! the same melodious voice,
In soft poetic mood,
Tells of a high-soul'd maiden's choice
Of danger, toils, and sacrifice
Of self for others' good:

20.

Her trials, agonies, and cares,
In touching strain he shows,
And how with fortitude she bears
Her sufferings, and bravely dares,
And triumphs at the close.

21.

He ceases! there is first a pause
To gather straggling sense,—
Without appeal to critic laws,
To him is giv'n with wild applause
The prize of eloquence.

22.

The youth is cloth'd the court before
In robes of high degree:
"Thy merit," saith the Emperor,
"Demandeth of us something more,—
Our secretary be!

23.

"We claim thy talents and thy pen,
To be the state's for life:
So think not of thy home again;
But choose among these noblemen
A daughter for thy wife!"

24.

The youth replies: "My faculties,
My energies, my life,—
These are my country's: Do with these
As thy imperial will shall please;
But spare the noble wife.

25.

"There is a maid of Tartar race,
In Shensee province bred;
For her sake I have risk'd disgrace,
And seek advancement to high place;
Her only can I wed!"

26.

A secret mandate — "Haste, obey!"
Writ with vermilion pen,
Is sent to bring from far Shensee
The maiden and her family
To court in proud Pekin.

27.

The youth install'd in place and pow'r,
Devoted to the state,
In favour rises ev'ry hour;
And fast imperial bounties show'r,
Making him rich and great.

28.

The Emperor, his tour complete,
Seeks now the capital;
Where loud huzzas his coming greet,
And hangings rich in every street
Display the joy of all.

29.

Alighting at the palace gate,
His eye encounters there
A well-known face, that seems to wait,
As if on some affair of state: —
Oft seen before; but where?

30.

Thought flashes ere the word is said;
"It is, it must be he!
The hero of the ambuscade,
But how appearing as a maid?
A sister it may be?"

31.

He motions her to follow; she
Obeys the beck'ning hand;
"I am the maiden from Shensee,
And wait upon my bended knee
My sovereign's command."

32.

"The voice thy secret doth betray:
Thou art, in very truth,
The same who in the ambush lay,
And led the charge that gain'd the day,—
Thou art that noble youth.

33.

" And here is one, who seeks thy hand —
Would call thee wife; and we
Did meditate by stern command
To wed thee; but 'twas vainly plann'd.
Brave maiden, thou art free."

34.

The maid replies: " There is but one
Would seek me in this sort,
And he my heart hath nobly won;
Let thy imperial will be done
In presence of thy court."

35.

The Emperor hath ta'en his seat,
And round the courtiers stand:
A figure veil'd from head to feet
Kneels suppliant, and seems to wait
The sovereign's command.

36.

" This maiden hath a claim on us
For services we own;
She seeks requital, and redress
For grievances sustain'd, and thus
Is suppliant to the throne:

37.

" Sir secretary! lift the veil,
And use her courteously."
He lifts it: starts, turns deadly pale,
For sense, and strength, and utt'rance fail,
Then sinks upon his knee.

38.

" Accept now," saith the Emperor,
" The bride that we bestow: —
Her merit equals thine; nay more!
'Tis well for thee, she did implore
This should be order'd so."

39.

In Pekin there was joy the day
When these join'd heart and hand.
God bless the Emperor! and may
Servants, as brave and wise as they,
In war, and peace, be found alway,
The mighty destinies to sway
Of the central flow'ry land.

RHINE STEAMER RHYMES.

1845.

1.

RHINE! Rhine! and do I see thee flow?
Broad, rapid, deep, in all the same
As nineteen hundred years ago,
When Julius Cæsar hither came,

2.

Leading his legions, red with blood
Of Gaul subdued from Alp to sea,
And driving nations to thy flood,
For wholesale massacre in thee?

3.

He saw thee, before boat or bark
Had ferried man thy current o'er;
When all was wild, and forests dark
Fring'd the steep crags of either shore—

4.

Forests to strike the soul with awe,
For never, since the world began,
Had they been touch'd by axe and saw,
Or made to feed the wants of man.—

5.

He saw thee worshipp'd by the Gaul,—
A gulf by God's hand plac'd, to shield
Man shelter'd by the roof and wall,
And tilling the paternal field,

6.

From him, who roaming east and west,
Or southward from the frozen sea,
Halted wherever pleas'd him best,
And slept beneath the forest tree.

7.

He saw, and ponder'd o'er thy wave:
Shall Cæsar too confide in this?
From ravage will thy torrent save
The province of his victories?

8.

He knew the Germans wild and free
As the wild beasts, by Providence
Created purposely to be
The dreary desert's denizens;—

9.

At times a herd of peaceful deer,
Content with what the forests yield,
And seeking only far and near
The richest, freshest pasture field;—

10.

At times, of winter wolves a pack,
Devouring and destroying all,
With ruin marking a wide track
To ocean from the China wall.

11.

And nature's bulwarks,—what are they
Against the strength, the skill of man?
Whose will the elements obey:—
Whate'er man dares to do he can.

12.

Untàm'd, he knew, that Suevan pride,
Viewing the harvests of rich Gaul,
Would scorn the terrors of thy tide,
And swim thee, Rhine, to ravage all.

13.

The world's end Romans deem'd thee then,
Ignotum pro magnifico —
But Cæsar, not as other men,
In thee saw but a river flow.

14.

His word was pass'd, the axe's stroke
Resounded thro' the rocky dell,
And many a distant echo wokè,
As fast the forest giants fell.

15.

Taught by this heaven-born engineer,
The legionary drove the pile,
The cross piece fix'd, and built the pier,
Singing rude songs of him the while, —

16.

Laid beams, and plank'd arch after arch,
Until the mighty Rhine was spann'd,
And Cæsar's eagles for the march
Pointed towards the pine-clad land.

17.

Vain was the march, though Cæsar led:
The migratory foe was gone;
The hordes, that threaten'd Gaul, had fled
Beyond the Danube and the Don.

18.

Where stood this bridge? ask Echo where!
Small men their deeds record on stone,
And obelisks their site declare —
Cæsar's, no record but his own.*

* There is a monument near Coblentz to commemorate the passage of the Rhine by General Hoche in the Revolutionary War. The spot is supposed to be near the site of Cæsar's bridge.

19.

His Commentaries tell his fame;
He left no monument, nor mark,
Beyond a legionary's name
Carv'd roughly on the forest bark.

20.

Call Cæsar from his grave to view
The scene of this exploit! or call
The boy that wore the wooden shoe*
In Aachen's camp of further Gaul!

21.

Or bid the colonist arise,
Who first on Rhine's bank drove a plough;
What would these find to recognise
In all I see before me now?

22.

All, all, how chang'd! except thy stream,
Eternal, ever-flowing Rhine!
Their feelings I may guess, or dream,—
They never could imagine mine.

* Caligula.

23.

The vineyard, with the cottage nigh,
Whose windows glisten in the sun, —
The spire, to heaven pointing high,
The bastion, embrasure, and gun, —

24.

The chimney, lofty as the spire,
The furnace, and the factory,
The gilded galley driv'n by fire,
Cleaving its noisy way thro' thee, —

25.

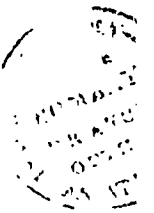
Of other gods and nations tell,
Of arts, and arms, to Rome unknown:
But still the frequent citadel
Shows war has mark'd thee for its own.

26.

On yonder crag a ruin stands,
Moss-cover'd like the rock, and gray;
It was not built by Roman hands,
A thousand years had pass'd away,

27.

Since Cæsar liv'd, before a stone
Was laid to form its battlement—
Of bloody deed, and prison groan,
It is a fearful monument.



28.

Castles made kings, when robber bands
That eagle's nest for refuge built:
It was an age of iron hands,
And weapons crimson'd to the hilt.

29.

In such a tow'r as that I see
Had English Richard's lion heart
Been broken in captivity,
But for a page's faithful art.

30.

Though Acre won from the Mooslim,
Had spread his fame through Europe far,
And Arab story told of him,
And children dream'd of Ankotar.*

* The Arab name for King Richard, corrupted from "Angleterre."

31.

What booted all this glory gain'd,
In battle-field of Palestine,
When envy held the lion chain'd,
In secret dungeon tow'r to pine?

32.

The monarch sought with a guitar
To while the weary hours away;
But think not that such sorrows are
Forgotten in a roundelay.

33.

The swelling note he pour'd in vain:
Hath ever captive's heart withstood
The canker of a prison chain,
The misery of solitude?

34.

Yet ev'ry wall that crowns the height
Was built to be the living tomb
Of waylaid wayfarer, or knight,
Expecting ransom or a doom.

35.

Fetters were fill'd, and mercy dol'd
From sordid views of avarice:
England redeem'd her king for gold,
Nor deem'd it shame to pay the price.

36.

Those days are past, and Cæsar's too,
And many more before and since —
Rhine! thou hast seen them, old and new,
Nor car'st what ends or what begins.

37.

Time only holds his course the same,
As thy eternal current, Rhine!
Man's works, deeds, language, race, and name
Perish, as will this verse of mine.

38.

Hark to the shouts that rend the sky!
Hark to the frequent cannon's roar!
Why stream those gorgeous flags? and why
Crowd moving myriads to the shore?

39.

Rhine's rocky amphitheatre
Seems on this glorious gala-day
As stand the gazers, tier on tier,
Straining their eyes into its bay,

40.

Like the stupendous fabric, he
Who wielded tenth the Cæsar's pow'r,
Built that Rome's wond'ring world might see
Slaves slain by thousands in an hour.

41.

But whither do these myriads run?
What comes the nation forth to see?
Have spectacles and pageants won
The German from his apathy?

42.

No pageant this! although a queen,
Heiress of England's royal line,
There on a steamer's deck is seen
Stemming the torrent of the Rhine.

43.

The German bosom swells with pride,
As she, a queen of kindred race,
With German consort by her side,
Bows to the shouts with native grace.

44.

No escort, and no guard hath she,
Save a proud few with bosoms starr'd;
And yet she comes a king to see,
Who waits for her in halls prepar'd.

45.

Strange symbol of the age, when one,
Born thus to rule with sovereign sway
Regions, from which the glorious sun
Never withholds the light of day,

46.

Like simple city dame can roam,
And, than her ancestors more wise,
Dread not intrigues abroad or home,
And prove historic warnings lies.

47.

For ever may she thus confide
In her own people's love, and know
King, peasant, peer, will vie with pride
To honour her where'er she go!

48.

How shall rejoicing Germany
Give to this royal heart content?
Pomps, pageants, please not her, for she
Hath just prorogu'd her Parliament.

49.

State etiquette she loaths and shuns,
And grandeur deems but dull routine:
'Tis from these vanities she runs
To novelty, and change of scene.

50.

There is not in the world a view
More beautiful than Drachenfels,
She hath admir'd, and sketch'd it too —
Can Germany show nothing else?

51.

An art there is, in which her sons
Boast other nations to excel—
The art King David practis'd once,
And kings have ever since lov'd well.

52.

This universal people now
With music and with song combine,
To place a wreath upon the brow
Of an illustrious son of Rhine.

53.

And whom, thus honour'd, and thus sung,
Doth Germany proclaim to be
Most glorious her great among,
The god of her idolatry?

54.

Large is the debt mankind doth owe
To Germany's creative mind;
And she hath many sons to show
Illustrious in every kind—

55.

Diplomatists, war's mighty men,
Deep searchers into nature's laws,
Men who have won, by sword, or pen,
Names the world echoes with applause.

56.

But none of these the wreath shall grace
This day with song and music woven —
Earth's mightiest are here to place
The laurel on thy brow, Beethoven!

57.

Mighty musician! envied name!
That Germany so glorifies,
As never in Olympic game
(Though kings contended for the prize,

58.

And Pindar, in immortal verse,
The victor's triumph sang to heav'n,)
Was name spread through the universe,
Or crown with equal glory giv'n.

59.

Yet, mark the age! supremely just!
To living merit gives no wreath,
But decks with it a marble bust—
Its laurels must be earn'd by death.

60.

To youth and manhood crowns of old
Were giv'n, the toil-worn soul to cheer;
Now, envy doth so long withhold,
They are but wreaths upon the bier.

61.

Hark! the full chorus of the name
With mighty crash of music closes: —
Thus doth the nation's voice proclaim
A glorious apotheosis!

62.

'Tis done! and homeward wends the throng;
Shall nothing rest, of this to tell?
Rhine! thou didst surely hear, for long
The echoes linger'd in thy dell.

63.

Thine was Beethoven! thine is Bonn!
And while thou flowest, this shall be
Remember'd as a glory won,
As well for Germany as thee.

HAFIZ RUHMUT'S DAUGHTER.

A Ballad of Rohilkhund.

A.D. 1775.

"O DAUGHTER! thou art dear to me, for in thy lovely face
I see thy father live again, and all his features trace.
That arched brow, that clear round eye, that look of pride, are his!
Come hither, dearest child! that I may print on them my kiss.
Well mayest thou be proud of him;—there was not such a man,
For counsel or for action, in the whole of Hindoostan.
Oh! hadst thou seen him in the days when Ahmed Shah was here,
When ev'ry khan of Hindoostan, and ev'ry proud ameer
Gather'd around th' Abdalee king, and he the flag unfurl'd,—
The green flag that the Prophet bless'd, and gave to win the world,
And all that host went forth with him, and fought the wondrous fight,
That quench'd in blood Mahratta pride, and broke the Peshwa's might.

Who in that field of Paneeput like Hafiz Ruhmut shone?
Thy father's counsel gain'd that day; 'twas he the battle won.
The noble Shah his merit saw, and plac'd him in the van:
He cared not for ameer, vizeer, but sought out the best man.
Hence envy grew, and hence the hate those titled lordlings bore;
And with them Shooja, the vizeer, to work his ruin swore:
They could not brook to see the Khan more trusted in the war,
And that his counsel, always wise, prevail'd in the durbar,
While they, neglected, held their state in greater pride than he:
His sway was of the mind, o'er men, Rohillas bold and free.
For years they bore him deadly hate, and sought to take his life;
Rivals they stirr'd to traitor-feud, and fierce domestic strife:
The Sikhs they brought down from the west, the hill men from Kumâon,
The Bunghish* threaten'd from the south, Mahrattas from Budâon:
But all discomfited in fight, or baffled by his skill,
Contributed, in self-despite, to make him greater still.
At last the envious Shooja went, and sought Feringee† aid:
The English vice is avarice—a pact with them he made:

* The Nuwab of Furukhabad is a Sheea of the Bunghish Patan race, and hostile to the Rohillas, who are Soonees. The Mahrattas again overran Rohilkhund after the departure of Ahmed Shah, but were driven out by the Rohillas, led by Hafiz Ruhmut.

† Europeans are called Feringees throughout the East: the word is a corruption from Frank.

May Warren Hastings* rue the day, he sign'd that bond of sin!—
When thus for gold, the blood he sold, of all thy father's kin.
The English to the battle came in serried column rang'd:
I watch'd them; ere a minute pass'd, to line their order chang'd.
The Khan, who these Feringee ways before had never seen,
Advanc'd to reconnoitre the contending hosts between.
Just then their guns unlimber'd, and a shot, the first that came,
The Khan struck on his elephant: curse on their perfect aim!
Oh! what a wail of woe arose! the whole Rohilla race
Receiv'd the wound, and on that ground found death, defeat, disgrace.—
And shall the tyrant, steep'd in crime, who dealt this mortal blow,
Thy noble father's murderer, his race's deadly foe,
The daughter to his bosom take? can she be ever his?
And shall he clasp her in his arms, and plant his burning kiss?—
'Tis not because she's beautiful; but o'er her father's name
His pride another triumph seeks:—dishonour is the aim."

"Oh, mother! talk not to me thus:—thou know'st well that I
Have made a vow to God above, and am resolv'd to die:

* The treaty with Shooja ood Doula for aid to conquer Rohilkhund was the charge against Warren Hastings most pressed at his trial, and best established.

And that my vow accepted is, I feel assur'd from this:—
I dream'd I saw my father in the seventh heav'n of bliss;
I knelt to take his blessing, and he gave the wonted kiss,
And press'd me to his heart until mine felt the beat of his;
And then I heard a heavenly voice thus whisper in my ear,
'Take comfort, child, thy place of rest will soon be with us here.'
So, mother! mix the fatal draught, which thou shalt see me take,
And hear me say with cheerfulness, '*labêk-allâh-labêk.*'"*

"Daughter! thy noble soul for death is well prepar'd, I know,
And I too should be glad indeed to quit this world of woe:
But duty holds me still to life, for I as well as thou
Have bound myself to heav'n above by voluntary vow.
Though life is bitterness, I live because revenge is sweet,
Because I hope I may be spar'd to see it come complete.
I cannot die till God hath wreak'd full vengeance on the head
Of the remorseless tyrant, who my husband's life-blood shed.
Oh! could it be permitted me God's instrument to be!
I'd joy to drive the dagger home, his dying pang to see.

* Labêk-allâh is the prayer with which every good Moosulman meets death: it means, "I obey thy summons, God!" being the strongest possible negative of the Arabic word for denial — "God forbid that I should deny thy summons."

Nay, start not! for the blood that flow'd, think! was it not our own?
Thou hadst a father, brothers too, but now thou art alone: —
Their blood it is that cries to heav'n; and never be it said,
Rohilla blood is nothing worth, and may be lightly shed.
Oh, daughter! wouldst thou lend thy hand! — and art thou not Patan?
Then easy wer't to reach the heart of this remorseless man."

"Yes, mother! 'twere a deed, indeed, of glorious renown,
To die reveng'd, and dying drag this haughty tyrant down:
But on a lord of thousands, how can I thy vengeance wreak?
Although the spirit may be strong, this arm is very weak."

"There is a way, my darling child, if there be but the will —
Life must be perill'd on the cast: they seldom live who kill."

"Oh, mother! show me but the way, and fear not I shall fail —
No dreadful form of instant death shall make my spirit quail;
I'll think upon my father's wrongs, and on my dream, and then
If vengeance lay there, I would brave the tiger in his den."

"Thou art a brave Rohilla girl, a noble true Patan,
'Twas Hafiz' spirit spoke in thee, come, listen to my plan."

She whisper'd in the maiden's ear, and long they so conferr'd,
But not a soul was let to know what project they matur'd.
And now the proud vizeer returns in triumph from the war,
For Rohilkhund, though desolate, obeys the Oudh Sirkar.
He bids the lovely daughter of the fall'n chief prepare
In bridal dress his sight to bless, his couch of state to share.
She comes with smiles, magnificent in youth and beauty's pride,
And dress'd and jewell'd as befits a royal eastern bride.
The lustful eye of Shooja falls upon her virgin charms;
He kisses as a bridegroom may, and clasps her in his arms;
And as her budding beauties his impatient fingers press,
His soul is lifted soon to heav'n, in ecstasy's excess.
But she! why raises she her hand, as if to smooth her hair?
All is well fasten'd by the pin — there's nothing wanting there:
She draws the pin, 'tis long and strong, the point shows dull and red, —
'Tis dy'd with poison from the shaft that lays the tiger dead.
Her soul is wrapp'd in thoughts of heav'n, she breathes a pray'r within,
And deeply into Shooja's side she drives the poison'd pin.
Ah! wherefore did that vengeful hand such fatal force apply?
The merest scratch would have suffic'd to make the victim die.
Shooja has felt the wound, and from his couch abruptly starts:
He nods significant, a slave salams as he departs:

The sword is drawn, the girl with smiles her neck gives to the blow —
The head rolls sever'd, still its eyes exulting triumph show.
The haughty Shooja has a wound, no leech's skill can heal,
Torments of body and of soul, such as the wicked feel,
For ten days wear his spirit out, and then the fest'ring sore
Gnaws at the vitals, and, *labêk!* his agony is o'er.
The great vizeer, who trampled on the children of his faith,
Upon a serpent set his foot, who stung him thus to death.*

* For the story of this ballad, see the note of the translator of the Seeri Mutakhireen to the passage relating the death of Shooja ood Doula, vizeer. This account of the manner of his death is still believed in Rohilkhund. There is no doubt that he died in his prime, of an incurable sore, a few days after having ordered the execution of Hafiz Ruhmut's daughter, as he left her apartment.

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

WHEN God created this wide earth, dividing sea and land,
First Europe, Asia, Africa, took shape from his right hand;
Beneath his left, America, from Greenland to the Horn,
Sprang into life, a second world unto the first twin-born.
Contemplating his mighty work the great Creator stood—
For man and for all living things he saw that it was good:
But here, saith he, this Southern sea, from India to the Pole,
Shall greedy ocean cover all? too wide his waters roll.
With that he dash'd the space to fill a remnant of his clay—
Australia and her islands rose: God's last creation they.
The mass is one, the hand the same, not so creation's mould—
In this world nothing lives or breathes of likeness to the old:
Though green woods cover hill and dale, elsewhere such trees never grew,
None change the leaf, but all their bark, when spring comes round, renew;

And creatures strange the forest range—the sable cockatoo,
With parrots red, and green, and blue, the woods fly screaming through,
Mock'd by the laughing jackass, who the song of all sings true.
But mostly silence reigns, for here the feather'd race are few;
No robins, linnets, wrens, and larks, with song each other woo,
And far the man must wander, who would hear bronze pigeons coo.
Yet black swans sport upon the lake, and stranger still to view,
The platypus, web-footed, bill'd, swims, dives, as fishes do;
Half-feather'd and unfit for flight, swift runs the tall emu;
While, nicely balanc'd on her tail, the timid kangaroo
Keeps anxious watch, with belly pouch'd for her brood to run into.
Like pouch have all four-footed things, yet nat'ralist ne'er knew,
Their life-blood how begotten, born, they from their mothers drew;
And who can guess the wond'rous ways ingenious nature finds,
To generate and keep in life all creatures in their kinds?
Sons of the West, whose place of rest is chosen on this shore,
Have you no fear, that Nature here her tricks may play once more?
Make monsters of your progeny? Hereafter who shall vouch
Your sons will not be born with tails, your daughters with the pouch?
Already she hath set her mark on all of human kind,
Who call this land their father-land, and here their being find.

74871

White is their hair, complexion fair, and eye of azure blue,
And sharp their physiognomy, just like the kangaroo;
But sharper still their wit, to drive hard bargains with the crew
Of emigrants and visitors, who come like me and you,
To see what in the antipodes our fellow-creatures do.
A thriving and a thrifty race, as any where we see men,
Are they who till the soil, and fill the townships of Van Diemen.
May God preserve them, as they are, a hardy race of free men,
Who ply the oar to hunt the whale in winter, thorough seamen,
Or sweep the bush with flocks and herds, of comfort never dreaming,
Whale-oil, and wool, the wealth they seek, to share with blue-ey'd women!—
And shall a race like this be swamp'd by felon importation,
That England may be sav'd the charge of lodging, and their ration,
When hulks and prisons will not hold the rogues of all the nation?
Better by half to hang them all, as in bluff Harry's time,
Than send them to inoculate with wickedness and crime,
And taint in perpetuity the children of a clime,
That gives to youth the promise fair of healthy manhood's prime.
Alas! the evil has been done, the wicked have their way—
The convict triumphs in his skill, and revels night and day,
In profligate debauchery, and boasts of the display.

And how can virtue lift its head, or merit hope to rise,
Or honesty maintain its own, or modesty have price,
Out-number'd, sham'd, and laugh'd to scorn by bold insulting vice?
Small hope is there for Tasman's land, unless Almighty God,
Incens'd by all this wickedness, himself shall use the rod;
Or lend the scourge of vengeance to some native born Alfred,
Who pitiless to crime, and by stern virtue's impulse led,
Shall sweep from off the island's face this felon crew, crime fed,
And set them loose in Oregon, to earn their daily bread.

THE SITAR.

A Moorish Melody, from the Alif Lyla.

FOR MUSIC.

1.

My sitar! my sitar! oh! my heart is nigh breaking!
They tell me that him I shall never more see.
How sweet, with a touch thy soft melody waking,
To come and take counsel and comfort with thee.
My sitar! my sitar! yes, the spirit desponding,
Feels balm in its wounds as thy melodies pour;
Say where? tell me where, to the finger responding,
Thy music lies hidden? and whence is the store?

2.

Know you not? know you not? that this dry piece of timber
Was once in the forest a giant-tree-king,
Where nightingales nestled, and still I remember
The songs that they sat on my branches to sing?

My leaves were the ears that delightedly gather'd
The notes of the choristers perch'd on my bough;
Through my fibres transmitted, when leaves droop'd and wither'd,
I hold them engrain'd in my heart even now.

3.

Plaints of love, tender love, were the lessons they taught me;
Such secrets more sacred I guard than my own.
Cruel axe, and the tools of the workman that wrought me,
Drew nothing but discords, a shriek, or a groan;
But if lover, true lover, with soul of right feeling,
My chords touch with gentle and delicate hand,
Thus, thus, I, the secrets of ages revealing,
Discourse in the language that hearts understand.

MAHUMMED KASIM.*

A. D. 710.

1.

FROM east to west, a weary length
Of heavy-laden camels wends;
A guard of more than common strength
With more than common care attends.

2.

Two tukht-ruwans† in gilded state
Adorn the centre of the train;
Eye dare not seek to penetrate,
Nor man to ask what these contain.

* See Elphinstone's History of India, or any other account of the early conquests of the Mahommedans in the East.

† Tukht-ruwans are covered little chambers, so contrived as to be carried between two camels.

3.

Across the desert to Karmân,
For forty days they journey on;
And thence to Yezd, and Ispahân,
But not yet is their journey done.

4

Onward they march, until the sun
Upon imperial Baghdad sets.
Another month! that goal is won,—
Behold the well-known minarets.

5.

Make way! make way! the convoy comes
With spoil and tribute from the East;
Blow loud the trumpets, beat the drums,
Proclaim a triumph and a feast!

6.

The wealth of Mooltan and of Sindh
Is pour'd into the Khalif's lap
By one whose virtue never sinn'd,
Whose fortune never met mishap.

7.

Mahummed Kasim sendeth these,
The right hand of the Khalif's pow'r—
The faithful one, whose victories
Have carried Islam to Alour.

8.

And he hath sent with all this gold
Two daughters of the Indian king,
High-born, accomplish'd, and high-soul'd,—
Of beauty so astonishing,

9.

They seem'd expressly form'd to share
A world's imperial diadem:
And Khalifs only worthy were
Possessors of so rich a gem.

10.

Throw open wide the palace gate!
Let in the convoy caravan,
Bid at the inner portal wait
Attendants for each tukht-ruwan.

11.

The Khalif Waleed in durbar
Receives the tribute-bearing train;
Applauds the conduct of the war,
Commends to God the martyrs slain,—

12.

Promotes, rewards, with searching care,
Those for their deeds distinguish'd most,
And glorifies with honours rare
The mighty leader of the host.

13.

But now within the harem's wall
He seeks from toils of state relief,
And bids them to his presence call
The daughters of the Indian chief.

14.

They come, close veil'd,—"Nay, 'tis not thus
We hop'd that ye would bless our sight;
Ye need not fear to pour on us
Your beauty's fullest flood of light."

15.

The damsels drop upon their knee,
And thus with energy exclaim —
" Great Lord! we are not worthy thee:
Take, take our lives! and hide our shame.

16.

" He that hath sent us here this day,
Hath first his wishes satisfied;
And is the servant's cast-away
Worthy to be the master's bride?"

17.

" Where now is honour? where is truth?"
The Khalif mov'd to wrath exclaims,—
" Where? if we find it not in youth
Nor in the prestige of great names.

18.

" Off with those treach'rous veils! and swear
By what ye know of heaven and hell;
Nay, by your father's head declare
The truth of this, that now ye tell."

19.

" Lord of the faithful, know that we,"
The elder of the two replies,
" Who boast a royal pedigree,
For truth give life the sacrifice.

20.

" Yet here, by our dear father's head,
Great Dahir's, as we saw it bleed,
We swear we are dishonoured,
And that thy Kasim did the deed.

21.

" 'Tis the religion of our race,
If ills befall, to tell and die.
We wish not to survive disgrace: —
Think! would a dying princess lie?"

22.

With that they fling their veils aside,
And stand expos'd to Walced's gaze;
The stamp of honour, truth, and pride
He sees impress'd on beauty's traits.

23.

He looks admiring. Doubt no more
Finds place within his royal breast,
What honour vouch'd, and beauty swore
Was palpable — a truth confess'd!

24.

"As God is great, 'tis so indeed!
Perish his glory for the crime!
The punishment for this foul deed
Shall be remember'd in all time."

25.

A warrant issues, sign'd and seal'd,
By special messenger convey'd,
Not to be open'd, nor reveal'd
Except upon Mooltan's parade.

26.

The army waits, drawn up in line:
Mahummed Kasim at its head
Looks at the seal, and countersign,
And gives the warrant to be read.

27.

'Tis order'd, that their general,
The flow'r of faith, the soldier's pride,
Alive shall be, before them all,
Sown up within a tough raw hide,

28.

Therein to linger, and to die,
Compress'd with torture as it shrank,
And so be sent to satisfy
His sovereign's insulted rank.

29.

A murmur runs along the line.
" Foul treachery!" the soldiers cry.
" Live Kasim! reign! Mooltan is thine,
Waleed himself shall rather die."

30.

But he the mutiny restrains.
" Men, I have taught ye to obey,
And what my sovereign ordains,
Shall I not like obedience pay?

31.

" The victim of foul treason I!
The Khalif is misled, ye know!
Still, if he order me to die,
I bow submissive: Be it so!"

32.

To Karmân by the desert road,
A camel courier doth pass,
Bearing a miserable load
Of all that once great Kasim was.

33.

The burthen to the palace gate
Of Khalif Waleed in Baghdad,
The messenger conveyeth straight;
'Tis forthwith to the presence had.

34.

Call now those Indian damsels forth,
That they the punishment may see
Suffer'd by wisdom, valour, worth,
For dealing false with them, and me."

35.

They come, and triumphing exclaim—
" Lord of the Faithful! 'tis well done!
Thou hast aveng'd our father's name,
Our country, and ourselves in one.

36.

" Of all that yet repeat thy creed,
From Indus to th' Atlantic wave,
None lives so true to thee, Walced!
Not one so loyal, wise, and brave,

37.

" As he, whom thou hast foully slain!
With him we are content to die;
So shall our country live again!
The tale we told thee was a lie."

38.

In every corner of Baghdad
Are wails of woe and loud lament.
Walced! Walced! thy heart is sad,
But vainly dost thou now repent.

39.

Thy glory from this day doth wane,
The Moslem yields to the Hindoo;
A Raja rules in Sindh again:
Mooltan is lost, and Ghuznee too.

40.

A woman's wiles, and thy rash haste,
Roll back the tide of Moslem sway;
Nor till three hundred years have past
Shall Indus hear the faithful pray.

41.

Daughters of Dahir! yours the deed
That set your native country free!
The fraud these practis'd on Walced
Undid great Kasim's victory.

42.

He won the land, and rul'd it well,
And sat on Dahir's throne his hour;
But ruin follow'd, when he fell —
The victim of capricious pow'r.

43.

They perill'd life in stratagem:
'Twas all that women might: and see!
A grateful country ow'd to them
Three centuries of liberty.

KISHEN KOOMAREE,

PRINCESS OF OODEEPOOR.

A true Tale of Rajwara.

A.D. 1810.

SAD is the fate of Oodeepoor, the great Seesodee chief
Sits helpless in his fathers' halls, with none to give relief,
While reckless, ruthless plunderers through Mewar ride at will,
And jungul grass grows thick on lands that none are left to till.
Whence all this desolation? whence this ruin—this disgrace—
To India's richest, fairest land*, Rajwara's noblest race?
Pride hath its fall indeed! but who hath dealt the deadly blow?
The spotless, pure, and beautiful! God hath ordain'd it so!
The Maharana's only child, to blight a nation's hope,
Was of the sex ordain'd to die before its eyes should ope.

* Rajwara and Rajisthan are names for the country of the Rajpoots, lying between the Indus and Chumbul rivers, S.W. of Agra. The Seesodees were the ruling race opposed to Akbar and the Moghuls. The Jypoor Rajpoots are Kychahas, the Joudhpoor Rhators, and Kota and Boondee Haras.

The child was fair, the father's heart yearn'd tenderly to love,—
He could not give the fatal sign,—the daughter liv'd and throve.
Her fame spread wide in Rajisthan, as she to beauty grew,
Where was the match for such a bride? a worthy consort who?

Betroth'd in early infancy to him that rul'd Joudhpoor,
The bridegroom died, before the bride had cross'd her father's door.
Mân Singh, the cousin, claims her hand—death cannot set her free—
A Rhator only can she wed, the chief of Rhators he.

It chanc'd a youthful Raja sat on Jypoor's rival throne;
He cannot bear, that one so fair should not be all his own;
He bribes to trace her matchless face a cunning limner's art,
Ambition then is chang'd to love,—the portrait fires his heart.
He woos her as a Raja may, the greatest in the land,
And sends a mission to demand, with formal suit, her hand:
The envoy stirs up jealousies against the Rhator lord,
And in an evil hour prevails, and wins the father's word.

To arms! to arms! the rival chiefs their hosts lead on to war,
And ravage spreads its horrors wide through Mewar and Marwar;
A war of honour and of caste enlists the swords of all,
The summons runs through kindred clans, and none resist the call;
The chiefs come banded to the field, Raj-Rawul, Thakoor, Râi,
Like Greeks of Agamemnon's host before the walls of Troy;

But she, the fair Seesodee bride, the war-disputed prize,
Than Helen's self a thousand times more beautiful and wise,
Sits in her father's house a maid, and wails her lot of woe;
The war has rag'd five years, and yet blood ceases not to flow.
The chiefs have sought Mahratta aid, and mercenary bands
Career and triumph every where, and seize the fairest lands:
Hara, Rhator, and Kychaha in forts desponding hide,
While o'er the plains bloodstain'd Kuzzâks and fierce Pindaras ride.

On the tall gate of Oodeepoor, the warder sentinel
Gives notice that a mounted band is riding up pell-mell;
Standards there are, and he that leads is dress'd in robes of state;
And rides, without once drawing bit, straight to the palace gate:
The warder's challenge from the wall is answer'd haughtily,—
'Tis Ameer Khan, the great Patan, who would the Rana see.

"This is no time for etiquette," the chief admitted saith,
"I come a messenger of peace, give hearing and good faith:
The land is ruin'd by this war, 'tis time that it should cease,
The rival Rajas have agreed to sign the bond of peace;
And thou shalt have a chosen band of troops establish'd here,
Which shall maintain thy rank and state, and keep the country clear.

All is arrang'd, and happy days for thee are yet in store;
Thy villages with husbandmen shall teem as heretofore,
And all Rajwara be restor'd to peace and happiness,
And Rajpoots, owing this to thee, thy name will ever bless.
One only obstacle there is: the cause of all this strife,—
The princess woo'd by both the chiefs—must not be either's wife,
The point of honour doth forbid: yield only this, 'tis done:
Choose! — shall the welfare of the whole be sacrific'd for one?"

"I understand," the Rana says, "alas! I've seen it long,
A victim God must have, to him our destinies belong:
But if atonement be requir'd, and one of us must die,
She hath with no one broken faith,—the guilty one, 'tis I."

"Nay, put away these gloomy thoughts," the shrewd Ameer replies,
"Consider well thy country's good, in what its welfare lies.
A maiden's life is little worth, behind the curtain past,
But thine thy country ill could spare, God grant it long may last:
'Tis woman's lot to have on earth small influence for good,
Though woes unnumber'd spring from her, of sin, and crime, and blood.
I know thy daughter innocent as new-born babe can be,
But will that save her caste and kin, and keep their honour free?

E'en now, were I with these my men to storm thy palace gate,
And take the princess hence by force, into the Joudhpoor state,
Thy honour were for ever lost with all of Rajpoot race;
Her spotless name would aggravate, not lessen the disgrace.
Think then! Seesodee pride requires the sacrifice. Do thou
What, hadst thou done when she was born, had not been needed now."

The Maharana thinks awhile, and sullen nods assent,
Th' Ameer departs the way he came, on his great mission bent.
The Princess, her devotions made, retires to rest at night;
A handmaid brings the caudle-cup to make her slumber light:
She tastes it bitter, stays her draught, and fierce her head uprears,
Scans searchingly the handmaid's face, and sees it wet with tears.

"My father's present this! it is, or wherefore shouldst thou weep,—
A draught of immortality, and everlasting sleep.
Go, tell my father, 'tis enough! the life that he did give
He is at all times free to take, — I wish not more to live:
But wherefore slay me thus by stealth? a princess born and bred,
A maiden of Seesodee race, should die as she would wed.
I know I am a sacrifice for him, and for his state,
And proudly will I meet my death, and deem the glory great.

Go, tell him to prepare the bowl; to-morrow in Durbar
I'll drink the pledge, Prosperity to him, and to Mewar."

The Maharana silent sits at noon amid his court: —
The purda* is withdrawn: Behold a vision of strange sort!
Kishen Koomaree issues forth, in bridal garments clad,
Her lovely face, unveil'd, with smiles seems radiant and glad.
" My country asks my life," says she, " hand me the poison'd bowl!
I see a bridegroom up in heav'n, to him I yield my soul:
And if I leave a spotless name, and honour be its meed,
Oh! may my country reap the fruit, and glory in this deed!"
She drinks with smiles, amid the tears of all the gather'd throng,—
She dies, — but her much honour'd name will be remember'd long,
While aught remains in Rajisthan of history and song.†

* Purda is the curtain dividing off the women's apartments.

† For the story of this ballad, see Tod's Rajisthan and Malcolm's History of Malwa: But the account of the Princess's death more exactly followed will be found in Ameer Khan's Memoirs, written by his secretary under his own dictation.

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018